

this affects the collection of errors in a not very remote degree. If postal administrations lay themselves open to cater for the stamp trade, will they be content with supplying the common or garden variety? Will they not in due course be induced to submit specialities, guaranteed to be of limited edition? It does not seem improbable. The action of the postmasters in Uganda, who refused to sell stamps to dealers on the plea of insufficient stock, is one not likely to be generally followed.

In a former instalment we discussed the errors that most readily appealed to our sense of sight—the errors of colour—and gave a short list of the better-known varieties. Again, in a desultory manner, let us glance at the "inverted centre" class, dearly loved by the specialist, and eagerly coveted by the rank and file. As one of the latter, I frankly own to having broken the tenth commandment more than once in this direction, and feel no shame in the confession. The centre of the design, or any part of the framework in fact being misplaced, and only one inversion occurring on a sheet as a rule, it is not a matter of surprise that the mistake is passed by the official overlooker and issued to the public. Which shows the difference that exists between the best of officials and the most ordinary of philatelists in the matter of keen observation.

The following are some of the most notable of the class in question:

Egypt.—The 5 paras, brown, of the 1872-75 issue, can be commonly found with the middle section of the design inverted. A specimen of this stamp is within the reach of all, as copies—used or unused—can be purchased for a few pence. This will make a good beginning to the collection.

Greece.—Unpaid letter stamps. Two values of the imperforates of the 1875 issue are found with inverted centres, viz., the 40 lepta and the 2 drachma. The 1dr. and 2dr., perf. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$, and the 60 lepta, perf. 11 by 13, of the 1878 issue, also bear them company. All these stamps are of the well-known design, printed in black and green, but are seldom met with and, needless to say, are priced accordingly.

Then, in the neighbouring country of Russia, we find two varieties of inversion—background and centre. In tabulated form they appear as follows:

- 1875-79 issue, background inverted, 1k., black and orange.
- 1875-79 issue, background inverted, 2k., black and rose.
- 1883 issue, background inverted, 7k., dark blue.
- 1883 issue, centre inverted, 14k., blue and rose.
- 1890-92 issue, centre inverted, 14k., blue and rose.

These being "fancy goods" command fancy prices, depending somewhat on the opportunity of the seller and the capacity of the purchaser. No two quotations I have received have been identical.

In Spain the following examples of stamps with inverted frames are to be found:

The 12c. rose and blue, of the 1865 issue, both imperforate and perf. 14. The former variety is worth about £9 used and the latter double as much used. In an unused condition they are practically unobtainable.

The 25 mils., rose and blue, 1867 issue, is similarly met with.

Turning to South and Central America, Peru and Guatemala furnish the most notorious examples. In Peru, the 1 dinero, green, 1868 issue, with arms inverted, is perhaps cheap at 70s. In Guatemala, of the 1881 (parrot) issue, three values are found with inverted centres, viz.:

- 2 centavos, brown and green.
- 5 centavos, orange and green.
- 20 centavos, yellow and green.

As may be imagined, these are not so eagerly sought after.

Lastly, we come to the rarest of this rare class—the inverted centres of the United States 1869 picture edition:

- 15c., brown and blue.
- 24c., green and purple.
- 30c., blue and carmine.

Several other examples will occur to most of my readers, but the foregoing are probably those best known to the generality. That their acquisition is by no means easy can readily be proved by experiment.

H. A. S.

(To be continued.)

BOARD OF TRADE OFFICIALS.

MR. WOOTTON, of Thirsk, writes, giving a list of several of these stamps, among them being the current 3d., which has not hitherto been noted by any of the correspondents who have communicated with us on the subject. So far, then, the list of stamps perforated with a crown over B.T. is:

- 1d. slate.
- 2d. lilac (perf. sideways).
- 1d. vermilion.
- 1d. lilac.
- 2d. purple on blue.
- 3d. brown on yellow.
- 4d. green and brown.
- 5d. lilac and blue.
- 6d. purple on red.
- 1s. green.

Thus, as regards the current issue, we have not yet heard of the 2d., 4d., 9d., and 10d.

As to the stamps perforated with the shield of the City of London, Mr. M. Z. Kuttner writes to us that the said shield merely denotes that the stamp was used, or intended to be used, on business connected with the Corporation. Mr. Kuttner says that he has seen quantities of these stamps, as described in our Supplement, used by the City of London School.

Readers will understand that, though we have spoken of these stamps in the same article which treats of the Board of Trade labels, the status of the two is very different; for the B.T. stamps are undoubtedly Government Officials, just as much as the I.R., O.W., &c., while nothing of the sort can be claimed for the stamps with City arms.

Montenegro.—We learn from the *Philatelic Monthly* that the Montenegrin Government some time ago offered for sale the remainders of the 1896 Jubilee issue (face-value, 2,500,000 florins), to be had at a heavy discount. The plates were to be sold with the stamps, and written guarantee given that no reprints will be made, nor similar postage-stamps issued in the future. But, if the plates are surrendered, how could the Government make reprints, unless, indeed, they were to retain the dies and make new plates from them? On the other hand, who is going to guarantee that the purchaser of the plates will refrain from using them? "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"

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